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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Previously Amended) A method of protecting an Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) network against network failures affecting traffic flow between an interior router (IR) and a predetermined primary area border router (ABR) using a back-up link between the IR and a predetermined alternate ABR, the method comprising steps of:

maintaining the back-up link in a dormant state during normal operations of the network, such that no traffic is forwarded to the back-up link during normal operations of the network; and

activating the back-up link in response to a network failure affecting communications between the IR and the primary ABR, such that traffic can be routed between the IR and the alternate ABR through the back-up link.
2. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of maintaining the back-up link in a dormant state comprises steps of:

assigning a backup interface type attribute to the back-up link; and

controlling each of the IR and the alternate ABR such that:

information respecting the back-up link is not advertised to adjacent routers; and

the back-up link is not identified as a valid route in respective forwarding tables of each of the IR and the alternate ABR.
3. (Previously Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the step of activating the back-up link comprises steps of:

detecting the network failure affecting communications between the IR and the primary ABR;

promoting the back-up link to an active status; and

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- advertising the back-up link as a valid route.
4. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the network failure is detected by the IR.
 5. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the step of promoting the back-up link to an active status is initiated by the IR.
 6. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the step of detecting the network failure comprises steps of:
detecting a loss of communications between the IR and the primary ABR;
monitoring a link between the IR and the primary ABR for a predetermined period, to detect recovery of communications; and
declaring a link failure if recovery of communications between the IR and the primary ABR is not detected within the predetermined period.
 7. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the step of promoting the back-up link comprises a step of negotiating an adjacency relationship between the IR and the alternate ABR.
 8. (Previously Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a step of deactivating the back-up link in response to a network recovery affecting communications between the IR and the primary ABR, such that traffic flow through the back-up link between the IR and the alternate ABR is terminated.
 9. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the step of deactivating the back-up link comprises steps of:
detecting the network recovery; and
demoting the back-up link to an inactive status.
 10. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the network recovery is detected by the IR.

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11. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the step of deactivating the back-up link to an inactive status is initiated by the IR.
12. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the step of detecting the network recovery comprises steps of:
detecting a recovery of communications between the IR and the primary ABR;
monitoring a link between the IR and the primary ABR for a predetermined period, to detect loss of communications; and
declaring a link recovery if loss of communications between the IR and the primary ABR is not detected within the predetermined period.
13. (Original) A method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the step of demoting the back-up link comprises a step of terminating an adjacency relationship between the IR and the alternate ABR.
14. (Original) A router adapted for protecting an Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) network against network failures affecting communications with a predetermined adjacent router using a back-up link to a predetermined alternate router, the router comprising:
means for maintaining the back-up link in a dormant state during normal operations of the network, such that no traffic is forwarded to the back-up link during normal operations of the network; and
means for activating the back-up link in response to a network failure affecting communications with the primary router, such that traffic can be routed through the back-up link.
15. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 14, wherein the back-up link is provisioned with a back-up interface type attribute.
16. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 15, wherein the means for maintaining the back-up link in a dormant state comprises means responsive to the assigned backup interface type attribute for controlling the router such that:
information respecting the back-up link is not advertised to adjacent routers; and

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the back-up link is not identified as a valid route in a respective forwarding table of the router.

17. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 14, wherein the means for activating the back-up link comprises:
 - means for detecting the network failure affecting communications with the primary adjacent router;
 - means for promoting the back-up link to an active status; and
 - means for advertising the back-up link as a valid route.
18. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 17, wherein the means for detecting the network failure comprises:
 - means for detecting a loss of communications with the primary adjacent router;
 - means for monitoring a link to the primary adjacent router for a predetermined period, to detect recovery of communications; and
 - means for declaring a link failure if recovery of communications with the primary adjacent router is not detected within the predetermined period.
19. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 17, wherein the means for promoting the back-up link comprises means for negotiating an adjacency relationship with the alternate router.
20. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 14, further comprising means for deactivating the back-up link in response to a network recovery affecting communications with the primary adjacent router, such that traffic flow with the alternate router through the back-up link is terminated.
21. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 20, wherein the means for deactivating the back-up link comprises:
 - means for detecting the network recovery; and
 - means for demoting the back-up link to an inactive status.

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22. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 21, wherein the means for detecting the network recovery comprises:
means for detecting a recovery of communications with the primary adjacent router;
means for monitoring a link to the primary adjacent router for a predetermined period, to detect loss of communications; and
means for declaring a link recovery if loss of communications with the primary adjacent router is not detected within the predetermined period.
23. (Original) A router as claimed in claim 21, wherein the means for demoting the back-up link comprises means for terminating an adjacency relationship with the alternate adjacent router.
24. (Previously Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with a software program adapted to control a router of an Open Shortest Path First (OSPF) network to protect against network failures affecting communications with a predetermined primary adjacent router using a back-up link to a predetermined alternate router, the computer-readable medium comprising:
software adapted to control the router to maintain the back-up link in a dormant state during normal operations of the network, such that no traffic is forwarded to the back-up link during normal operations of the network; and
software adapted to control the router to activate the back-up link in response to a network failure affecting communications with the primary router, such that traffic can be routed through the back-up link.
25. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 24, wherein the back-up link is provisioned with a back-up interface type attribute.
26. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 25, wherein the software adapted to control the router to maintain the back-up link in a dormant state comprises software responsive to the assigned backup interface type attribute for controlling the router such that:
information respecting the back-up link is not advertised to adjacent routers; and

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the back-up link is not identified as a valid route in a respective forwarding table of the router.

27. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 24, wherein the software adapted to control the router to activate the back-up link comprises:
- software adapted to control the router to detect the network failure affecting communications with the primary adjacent router;
 - software adapted to control the router to promote the back-up link to an active status;
 - and
 - software adapted to control the router to advertise the back-up link as a valid route.
28. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 27, wherein the software adapted to control the router to detect the network failure comprises:
- software adapted to control the router to detect a loss of communications with the primary adjacent router;
 - software adapted to control the router to monitor a link to the primary adjacent router for a predetermined period, to detect recovery of communications; and
 - software adapted to control the router to declare a link failure if recovery of communications with the primary adjacent router is not detected within the predetermined period.
29. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 27, wherein the software adapted to control the router to promote the back-up link comprises:
- software adapted to control the router to negotiate an adjacency relationship with the alternate router; and
 - software adapted to control the router to update a respective forwarding table of the router to identify the back-up link as a valid route.
30. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 24, further comprising software adapted to control the router to deactivate the back-up link in response to a network recovery affecting communications with the primary adjacent

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router, such that traffic flow with the alternate router through the back-up link is terminated.

31. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 30, wherein the software adapted to control the router to deactivate the back-up link comprises:
software adapted to control the router to detect the network recovery; and
software adapted to control the router to demote the back-up link to an inactive status.
32. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 31, wherein the software adapted to control the router to detect the network recovery comprises:
software adapted to control the router to detect a recovery of communications with the primary adjacent router;
software adapted to control the router to monitor a link to the primary adjacent router for a predetermined period, to detect loss of communications; and
software adapted to control the router to declare a link recovery if loss of communications with the primary adjacent router is not detected within the predetermined period.
33. (Previously Amended) The computer-readable medium as claimed in claim 31, wherein the software adapted to control the router to demote the back-up link comprises:
software adapted to control the router to terminate an adjacency relationship with the alternate adjacent router; and
software adapted to control the router to update a respective forwarding table of the router to reflect an inactive status the back-up link.